

**TOWN OF ENFIELD
JOHNSTON PROPERTY USE COMMITTEE**

**MEETING MINUTES
February 9, 2023**

Johnston Property Use Committee (JPUC) Members in Attendance: Nancy L. Smith (via Teams), Bradley Rich, Alice Kennedy, Nate Miller, Affrille Degoma, Julie Eckert

JPUC Members Absent: Franklin (Bud) Lynch, Jr.

Ex Officio Members in Attendance: Ed Morris, Town Manager and Kevin Marker, Recreation Director

Ex Officio Members in Absent: N/A

Called to order at 5:30 PM

The meeting started with introductions of the JPUC and Master Planning Task Force members.

Approve Minutes

Ed Morris explained that the date of the minutes was added to the draft minutes that were distributed.

Motion to approve the minutes of January 26, 2023, was made by Nancy Smith and Seconded by Brad Rich. Motion was passed 6-0.

BUSINESS

Discussion with Master Planning Task Force- Represented by David Fracht, Lindsey Smith and Celie Aufiero

Nate Miller welcomed the Master Planning Task Force to the meeting, and asked them to share what their vision for the Johnston property was, and any concerns that they have.

Lindsey Smith started for the Master Planning Task Force. Some of the points she made was:

- We need to be careful not to pick pieces of the Master Plan, but to look at multiple places for the overall vision.
- The Master Plan overall supports and values
 - recreation.
 - open space and natural settings.
 - maintaining the rural character of the Town.
 - Rail Trail

Lindsey also shared her personal opinion that the Town should keep the land, and pointed out that she feels the land will not decrease in value, and could be sold later if that is decided in the future. She also shared that natural gems like this are valuable to our community, and she feels keeping it walk and bike in would be an added asset that protects the park and rail trail.

David Fracht added that it was clear during the public input portion of the Master Plan that the town places a big value on recreation, and should use recreation as leverage for economic development. He explained that in terms of water access, the Johnston property as it sits falls between Cole Pond which is hike in only and Shakoma Beach which is vehicle accessible. The Johnston Property could be walk or bike in with a much shorter and fairly easy walk.

Brad Rich asked if they thought the Master Plan says that it should be walk or bike in access. Both David and Lindsey answer No. Lindsey did add that the Master Plan does state that it values the rail trail, and she felt every new or increased access across the rail trail detracts from it.

David Fracht went on to discuss his concerns with the property.

- Feels the Rail Trail and water limits access.
- Challenges with the road and vehicles – David’s opinion is that the road should be wide enough for two cars if vehicles are allowed to access the property.

Alice Kennedy asked him if he felt there was a legal reason, he felt the road should be two-way.?

- He answered no, but felt there could be access issues if it was not.

Nate asked what David and Lindsey felt the Master Plan meant when it said:

“Mascoma Lake Lakeshore Plan

The town owns several waterfront properties, and the Rail-Trail provides direct public access to about one mile of shoreline. These resources should be leveraged to provide public recreation access and amenities that support tourism-based economic development and contribute to quality of life for town residents.”

Lindsey stated she felt it said that the property should remain town owned and not be developed.

Nate reiterated that she feels the Master Plan says that it should be maintained as Town land and used for recreation in some capacity.

Celie added that she agreed with what David and Lindsey have stated.

Alice Kennedy expressed her appreciation for the work the Master Planning Task Force has completed and the great work on soliciting public comments.

Mascoma Lake Association (MLA) - Represented by Martha Jane Rich, Marcy Innes, and Peter Dixon

Martha started by stating that a portion of the MLA Board has met and she was there to give consensus not an official position. The board wants to make sure that the board understands their position is:

- Based on their mission to focus on environments preservation
 - Water Quality
 - Invasive Species
- The Town should keep the land
- Should keep it in as natural of a state as possible.

- Promote Responsible and sustainable use
- They understand that this could be a good place for a beach because Shakoma Beach is hard to access by kids and the elderly.

Concerns are:

- The Shallow shelf in front of the property has had Eurasian Milfoil issues, and though they have not taken much from that area lately, disturbance of the shelf could reinvigorate growth or allow for more seeding.
- There have been loon nests in that area just a little closer to the dam, and they want to make sure that whatever is done does not hinder future nesting.

Nate Miller asked what she means by responsible recreation, because she stated it a few times?

Martha Rich answered keeping it natural, watching out for things like noise, the loon nests, and to minimize wakes and erosion of the shoreline. Natural Preservation.

Nate asked if boaters are communicated with about how the location of loon nests are communicated.

The MLA group answered:

- Floaters are placed to identify the area.

Nancy Smith asked if boaters know these signs?

- Boaters must take tests with this type of information on it.
- They also use milfoil floaters and diver down flags to communicate to boaters.

Nancy followed up by asking about invasives, loon nests, and noise issues.

The MLA stated they would like to work with the town to provide educational signage if that would be acceptable.

During public discussion there was some talk back and forth about road access to the property.

Dr. Beaufait said his views were in line with the two groups we heard from tonight, and added that the property could also be water accessible by kayaks and other personal watercraft by putting in at the two boat launches.

Barbara Jones let the committee know that the kayaks on the property now were hers. She has also put some picnic tables down there. She could see more tables down there and possibly overnight camping. She ended by thanking the committee for their work on this project.

Upcoming meetings:

February 23rd

Conservation Commission

Recreation Commission

March 9th

Abutters

Adjourned at 6:50